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HACKER, WILLIAM.

SKETCHES & INCIDENTS IN THE  
LIVES...OF MY ANCESTORS,  
HISTORICAL & BIOGRAPHICAL.







FAMILY HISTORY

of

WILLIAM HACKER

photos of: Mary Ann Hacker, wife of William Hacker (no dates or location)  
and  
William Hacker

Pictures (5) of William Hacker at different stages of his life

Title page:

SKETCHES AN INCIDENTS

in the

LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF MY ANCESTORS

HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL

by

WILLIAM HACKER, LL.D.

of

Shelbyville, Indiana

Preface:

PREFACE.

At the request of many of my immediate relatives the following pages have been prepared in order to give a sketch of the Lives and Characters of our Ancestors, and trace the line of family descent as far back into the remote ages as history and family traditions will justify. In these sketches of the first five generations the male line through which we of the present generation have descended has alone been considered. Neither history nor tradition has left anything whatever, so far as is known, of the female line of our descent of those early times. While perhaps other lines of the family name, were their lives and transactions sought out and placed upon record, might show a more elevated and elevated and honorable character than that of our own, yet I have made no attempt to inquire how that may be; but, in the narrative found in the following pages, I have simply confined myself to the tracing out of the immediate line of our own descent.

What is found in the following pages in regard to the times prior to 1630, is taken mainly from family traditions, yet enough is found in the histories of the times to satisfy the mind that those traditions are reliable. Subsequent to that period, history generally has been followed, family traditions being only used to correct certain historical events, or to fill up a space of time apparently left blank by historians.

It is perhaps proper that I should further state that this work was not undertaken with a view of publication. The matter treated of is of too local nature for that. I have only sought to place in a manuscript form the line of descent, and so much of the transactions of our ancestors, as will give a clear view of the lives and characters they severally maintained while engaged in the busy scenes of life. And if the perusal of the manuscript thus prepared will afford my children, and other relatives, any satisfaction in learning who and what their ancestors really were, my whole object will be attained, WILLIAM HACKER Shelbyville, Indiana, December 5th, 188

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[5] Chapter I

The family name Hacker originated in the year 1524 and under the following circumstances.

Near the close of the fifteenth century there was residing in the kingdom of Saxony a family by the name of Heckardt a large landed proprietor wealthy and of great influence in the government of that province.

In 1498 there was born to this family their first son and to whom the parents gave the name of Willhelm. That child became the founder of our family name and from him has descended all the name that I have as yet met with.

Of course the original name has been changed the true course for which will be found in the following circumstances.

The father of Willhelm dieing about 1519 brought the son into full possession of his fathers title and vast estates. And it will be remembered that this was about the time that Luther the great reformer of the sixteenth century broke off from the church of Rome, which for the past ten [6] centuries had been ruling the governments of the different nations of Europe with such terrable despotism and keeping the masses of the people in such intellectual darkness and superstition.

Frederick the reigning Duke of Saxony--or Elector, as he is called in history--smarting under this species of despotism at that time imposed upon his people by the Emperor Maximilliam under the dictates of the Pope of Rome and wishing any change that would retrieve him from the burden he had to carry as is well known, early espoused the cause of Luther and became his protector in many a fierce contest in which the great reformer found himself engaged with the opponents of Civil as well as religious liberty.

Many of the influential citizens also took sides with the reformation and among these was the young Willhelm Heckardt, who as before stated had just come into possession of his father's title and estates. Family tradition informs us that he at once entered into the contest with all the arder of his young saxon blood.

This soon brought upon him the condemnation of the church. Hot persecution was instituted against him as well as others by the emesaries [7] of the Pope and from which not even the powerful influence of Frederick was able to rescue him.

At the death of the Emperor Maximilliam, June 28th 1519, Charles 1st of Spain, Grandson of the deseaced Emperor succeeded him.

Charles--known in history as Charles V of Germany--proved to be a more bigoted and tyrannical ruler than that of his predecessor, because perhaps he had more energy and greater endowments of mental capacity and was therefore better able to carry out his tyrannical purposes against the freedom of thought just at that time bursting forth upon a startled world. He therefore had Luther summoned before him at the City of Worms, April 17th, 1521. At the conclusion of that council, under date of May 8th 1521, he pronounced the condemnation of the Empire against the new faith, in which was involved all the deciples adherents and followers of the reformer.

This fearful judgment caused young Heckardt under the advise of Frederick to seek an asylum in England there to awaite the change in circumstances that might insure his safe return.

This perhaps was what the church party really [8] desired. His fleeing to England was taken as conclusive evidence against him. He was therefore without any form of trial condemned as a heretic his revenues and estates all seized, confiscated, disposed of and the procedes at once sent on to Rome to aid in the erection of the Great St. Peters, which at that time the Pope had under way and pushing on to completion as fast as means could in any way be secured.

When Heckardt arrived in London shortly after the close of the Diet of Worms 1521 Henry VIII was in close communion with the Church of Rome and was defending her dogmas against the writings of Luther and the reformation. Consequently persecution under Prime Minister--Cardinal Walsey--ran high in England as well as on the Continent.

Many of the discenters--and especially among the more wealthy--were seized, thrown into prison, condemned, their property confiscated and helped to replenish the kings treasury or sent on to Rome to aid in the work going on under the direction of the Pope. Under these circumstances Heckardt not yet knowing what course had been taken with his estates left in Saxony and fearing that the emisaries of the Church were still in pursuit [9] of him as he had been well educated and could speak the English language fluently he thought it best while then in exile to anglicize his name and thus if possible mislead the agents of the Pope should they be on his track in London and by that means escape being arrested.

In doing this he had but to leave off the "dt" which in the English would be silent and then transposed the "e" and "a" thus rendering it in full English "Hacker" as it is today. He also changed the name "Wilhelm" into William which is the English pronunciation of that name. This is the true origin of the name and has ever since been so written.

This did not however cause him to waver in the faith he had espoused or deter him in the least in doing all in his power to aid in the great reformation then starting up among the nations of Europe. He consequently employed much of his time in going from house to house in London and Essex reading the Bible and distributing Luthers tracts among the poor of those cities and occasionally preaching to the people--as opportunity offered--the doctrines of the reformation. "Justification by Faith." He was then among the first [10] if not the very first to preach the great reformation of the sixteenth century in and about London.

This energetic course of our venerable ancestor began soon to produce its legitimate fruits. Many converts to the new faith were made and the common people began to realize how fearfully they had been mistaught and kept in ignorance of the truths as revealed in the Bible by a corrupt and designing Priesthood.

Among the more prominent who early came forward to aid in carrying on this good work thus so happily begun were Foxe, Coverdale, Topley, John and William Pykes, Harris, Formern and many others who became most zealous and energetic preachers of the new faith.

These reformers becoming numerous became more bold and did not confine themselves to teaching the poor and of proclaiming the "Glad Tidings" in cottages and in the Byways but Bower Hall the residence of the Squires of Bumpstead was thrown open to them and Foxe, Topley, Tyhall with others often read and expounded the Holy Scriptures in the great hall of that mansion in the presence of the Master [11] and all his household.

While matters were thus progressing word was received from Rome that money must be had from England or the work on the Great Cathedral must cease. And urged upon Cardinal Walsey to stir up his Bishops and Priests to renewed exertion in this behalf "Get money no matter how" But get and send on more money."

For some time the Bishop of London had watched the proceedings of these reformers with much uneasiness. But having at length been notified of what was demanded of him at Rome and having received instructions in relation thereto from his Cardinal he at once commenced operations. Knowing the extreme poverty of Hacker that he had not the means of himself to procure the Bibles and tracts he was distributing among the poor and in consequence then must be associated with him in this work persons of wealth and large means he therefore procured an order from Sir Thomas More

and caused Hacker to be arrested and thrown into prison. Subsequently taken before the Bishop examined and threatened that if he did not at once disclose the names of those who had shown him [12] hospitality and furnished him with the means of support as well as the Bibles and tracts he had been distributing he should be most fearfully tortured and perhaps burned at the stake. All this however did not move him and he absolutely refused to disclose a single name. He was again thrown into prison--put into the stocks and tortured in every conceivable way that human demons could devise. Under all this he remained firm and defied his tormentors to do their worst. He would disclose nothing.

They next placed him on the rack and tortured him until every joint in his whole body was litterly tourn out of place and all without accomplishing their object. When as a last resort and while on the rack suffering all the tortures that intoument could inflict they brought live coals of fire and held them along the spinal colume until the flesh became literally wasted and begun to break and peel off under this hor<sup>r</sup>able torture as they knew it wood-his mind wandered and when they would ask him if such or such a person did non aid him in the course he had been pursuing he would reply "o yes, yes," of course not knowing what what he said. And so they went on until they had thus extorted from him the names of some forty wealthy individuals resideing in and about London and Essex.

This occurence took place in 1527 after Hacker had for the past six years gone from home to home reading and expounding the scriptures among the poor and teaching them the great plan of salvation "Justification by Faith." The good seed he had thus sown was not however to be crushed out by anything which he might be called to suffer or that any number of his Co\_juters might have to pass through. And although the work on the great Cathedral at Rome was still to go on by means thus obtained the Greater work of the reformation was also destined to go on in a thousand fold greater ratio.

Having thus gained the object sought for by the torturing of the unfortunate Hacker they left him and proceded at once to arrest the parties whose names had thus been extorted and upon that evidence alone they were declared heretics. Many of them burned at the stake and otherwise tortured out of their lives, their property all [14] confiscated, disposed of and the procedes sent on to Rome and the Pope once more made happy.

The only one out of the whole number connected that escaped torture and death which we have any account of was a rich merchant of London by the name of Monmouth who on being examined before Sir Thomas More readily admitted that he had imported the Bible and other Books printed in the English language "that they had been on his shelves for more than two years and he really could not see that they had ever hurt any one."

To this More is said to have tauntingly replied "It is a hard matter to put a dry stick into the fire without its burning or to nurse or smoke in our bosom and not be stung by it."

Monmouth foreseeing what was intended and all he could hope for from his Judge appealed in person to Walsey well knowing that he alone could save him from the awful doom evidently handing over him.

To his appeal to the Chancelor he set forth the distress that must follow "to the poor workinen in London and the surrounding country be being thrown out of employment should he be retained in prison and his business obstructed. [15] Besides which the commerce he had been carrying on with foreign countries would be stoped and large revenues thereby brought into the Kings exchequer would be cut off and the government greatly embarrased."

Walsey who was as much a statesman as a Churchman, being on the eve of a struggle with the Pope as well as with the Emperor and fearing to do anything just at that

time to cause the people to become discontented or to endanger the revenues of the government ordered Monmouth released from prison and through state policy he thus escaped the fearful tortures and death that so many of his neighbors and acquaintances had to endure.

After Henry VIII had finally broken with the Pope and degraded Walsey, Monmouth became an Alderman and finally high shiriff of London and thus he became the means by the influence he was enabled to exert of saving many a poor protestant from persecution and torture that he must otherwise have had to suffer.

Having succeeded in the manner as described in extorting the names from Hacker that they desired they released him from prison and [16] gave him over to his family and friends who nursed him as tenderly as possible. But of course he could never recover from the horrible condition in which they had brought him and after lingering along for a few months or perhaps a year in the most intense suffering he died. And it may now be asked who was responsible for this horrible species of torture. To which truth and the histories of the times gives the following answer.

The Pope had commenced erecting the great Cathedral at Rome called the "St. Peters." Money of course was wanted to carry on the work and money must be had, not matter what means should be resorted to, to procure it. "The end to be accomplished would justify the means" and so money must come. The Bishop of London was instructed accordingly and so under the immediate instrumentality of Sir Thomas More a most willing tool of the Church, the end was reached in the manner as stated so far at least as England was concerned.

The great historian of the reformation J. H. M<sub>nl</sub> D'Aubique in speaking of the effect produced by these early preachers of the reformation in and about London between the years 1521 and 1528 says "For some time the Bishop of London watched these movements with uneasiness. He caused Hacker to be arrested, who, for six years past, had gone from house to house reading the Bible in London and Essex; examined and threatened him, inquired carefully after the names of those who had shown him hospitality; and the poor man in alarm had given up about forty of his brethren."

This extract while it confirms family tradition does not tell the whole facts connected with the circumstances in giving up his brethren. "He gave up the names of about forty" truly but it was under the most cruel tortures it was possible to inflict and not then until reason was theroned and his mind completely thrown off its balance and the "poor man: really knew nothing about what he was saying. Then and only then did they get the names they desired from him.

What immediate descendants William Hacker left at the time of his death is not known. History gives us nothing and family tradition but little that we can rely upon. All that I have upon that point is that he left one son--perhaps [18] his first born--named Frederick--after the Elector of Saxony--and born about the time its father was undergoing the cruel tortures I have just described and so could have only been but an infant at the time of his fathers death.

A space of time of about ninety years now intervenes--that is from 1528 to 1615--in which I find but little either in history or traditions to aid in the work on hands. Our line of ancestors being placed under the ban of the Church--and of course--of the government also, retires into obscurity and all that is really known is that what were left of them settled down in the County of Leicester diligently employing their time in striving to make an honest living as best they could remaining firm and unwavering in the doctrines of the reformation and using every available means of improving their mental and moral faculties.

From Frederick our line descends through his son John born about 1570 and named for Duke John the brother of Frederick the Elector of Saxony another staunch friend of the reformation. It was he that so terrable outwitted the Roman Bishop with his knights

of Malta in rescuing Luther from their intended assasination on his return [19] from the Diet of Worms.

Here again history furnishes us nothing and family tradition but little that can be relied upon only that the family during this generation remained in obscurity, honestly engaged in business pursuits faithfully seeking to improve the mental powers by proper cultivation and then still elevating and raising higher the standard of moral virtue. How well this was accomplished the next generation will show.

It is presumed that by this time the family had lost its Saxon originality and had become thoroughly Anglized and from steady industrious habits had not only secured a homewith a competency but had arose to a position of some considerable influence in community. All this is inferable from what we learn from history of the next in the line of decent of our ancestors and whose achievements and honorable cause. it now becomes my duty to endeavor to trace out.



We now come to the second historical character in the line of our family decent

Francis Hacker - son of John and the great grandson of the original William Hacker born about 1615 became the celebrated Colonel Francis Hacker to whom was issued the warrent for the execution of Charles the First of England and who so hamsomly done up that little job for the British Monarchey on the 30th of January 1649. He thus became a historical Character and family traditions are all lost in the histories of the stirring times in which he lived. Or rather we sink family traditions and take history as we find it spread out in the numerous works which has been consulted in the preparation of these pages.

One author says, "He was a gentleman of commanding appearance. Strong intellectual developments, finely educated and of considerable means derived from his ancestors who lived in the County of Leicester."

Taking this as true it demonstrates how successful had been the efforts of the family [21] in the past two generations in elevating the name and regaining for it what had been lost by the severe persecution and consequent degradation through which it had been called to pass a century before. It would seem that by diligent labor and the careful cultivation of the mental powers the family had regained much if not all the prestige it possessed before being driven into exile from its native Saxony.

As to the social position Francis Hacker occupied in community we know but little, only that he was a strict and most zealous Presbyterian of the liberal or republican school. That in while he was firm and unyielding in his own faith, he could be tolerant towards those of a different persuasion.

History however gives us only to see the political position he occupied and from which we can readily judge of other matters in connection with his life's history. And in order to get a better and more clear understanding of this subject, I shall select from history such well authenticated facts as may serve to show his numerous decendants of the present day the true merit we feel he is justly entitled to receive at our hands.

[22] His force of Character and mental endowments must have been extraordinary and his strict integrity must have been beyond praise, especially so when we take into consideration the poverty and degradation into which the family had been driven by Popish persecution less than a Century before.

At the age of twenty he is an influential officer in the British Army. At twenty-five he is in full command of a company of regulars and before reaching the age of thirty, he is at the head and in command of a regiment in that division of the army which took sides with the Parliament against the encroachments of the King who was at that time endeavoring to arbitrarily rule the nation without a Parliament. And then if possible bring back the entire nation to the old order of things that existed prior to the commencement of the reformation.

But in order the better to understand this whole matter as well as to show the part our illustrious ancestor took in this great struggle then about to commence, in which Freedom and the rights of conscience were arrayed in [23] a death struggle against the encroachments of superstition, bigotry and intolerance, it will be well that we go back and take a view of the condition of things under the government for a few years anterior to the time of which we write. And in doing this I shall have





to quote from the annals of the times such well authenticated facts as I find therein recorded, I accordingly make the following extracts.

1st "The long and brilliant reign of Elizabeth the last of the Tudors, reached a little beyond the sixteenth century. The seventeenth was the century of the Stuarts, as narrow-minded, heartless, and tyrannical a set of rulers as ever disgraced a throne. England and Scotland having been united by the accession of the Stuarts, who were hereditary monarchs of both Kingdoms, the oldtime border wars and forays between these Kingdoms ceased, except as they sometimes took opposite sides in the Civil wars. This century was a stirring and momentous one in English history. Two great revolutions, and Civil wars sprung from the irreparable conflicts between Kingly despotism and popular liberty. The [24] general result of which was in favor of freedom. And the absolute tyranny of the Stuarts may therefore be counted to have done more for English history than the more constitutional reigns of the Tudors."

2nd "At the death of Elizabeth, James VI of Scotland, son of the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots, assended the throne as the next heir, and took the title of James I in 1603.

He was the first of the House of Stuart who sat on the English throne. An awkward, pedemtic, and obstinate Scotchman, he was a devout believer in the Divine right of Kings, and his extravagant abuse of his royal prerogative laid the foundation of the misfortunes of his children and country."

3rd "It was during the reign of this tyrant, 1618, that the much lamented Sir Walter Raleigh who had done so much in the early colonization of America, after suffering thirteen years imprisonment, was brought to a mock trial, condemned and beheaded. His fate was universally deplored as an act of meanness and weakness [25] on the part of James."

4th "Charles I succeeded to the throne on the death of his father in 1625. He was a much abler and more excellent man than James, but entertaining the same extravagant notions of his royal prerogatives, his reign was one long battle with his subjects, in which he finally suffered defeat and death.

Soon after his succession, he completed his marriage engagements with Henrietta, daughter of Louis VIII of France, a most bigoted Catholic Princess, who succeeded with the aid of the Jesuitical Priests she employed about her in tincturing the mind of the King as well as that of her son with her own intolerant faith. And in this may no doubt be found a key to all of Charles obnoxious proceedings towards the liberty of his people, and which finally cost him his head."

5th "The struggle between Charles and his Parliament ran so high, that he at length arrested several members and sent them to prison. This created an immense excitement. He then [26] dismissed his Parliament, and attempted, for the next eleven years, to rule without a Parliament. For this attempt he proceeded to levy ship money, a tax for the support of the navy. This tax levy created still greater excitement, and the Celebrated John Hampton, for resisting its payment, was brought to trial and condemned 1634."

6th "Archbishop Land, another tool of the King's tyranny, and a bigoted Jesuite in disguise, prepared, in 1637, a liturgy which he and his master attempted to force upon the Scotch Prebyterians, who, in the following year 1638, formed and subscribed to a National Covenant, and raised riots which speedily grew into rebellion.

There Covenanters assembled in great force under their general Leslie, seized



Wm Hacker

Edinburgh and other places, and advanced into England. 1639--Charles was compelled at length to call another Parliament, after ruling eleven years without one.

7th "After Calling, April 13th 1640 and dissolving May 5, a parliament, which he found determined to assert the liberties of the people, he was compelled [27] by the demands of his people and the war in Scotland, to assemble, Nov. 3d the Celebrated Long Parliament, so called because of its long continuance."

8th The Long Parliament, which had from the outset exhibited its determination to resist the King, speedily ordered the arrest of Sa\_\_ and Stratford, the chief advisers of his tyranny, tried and condemned the latter for treason. Charles then deserted his fallen minister, and Stratford was beheaded 1641."

9th "The struggle between Charles and his parliament at length resulted in the terrible civil war which overthrew the throne and finally sent the King himself to the block.

The first battle of this war was fought at Edgehill October 23rd 1642 and was soon followed by many others."

10th "The battle of Marston Moor, won by the valor of Oliver Cromwell and his regiment of "Ironsides," on the 2nd day of July 1644 gave a fatal blow to the game of the King And the [28] battle of Naseby, fought June 14, 1645, resulted in a complete and crushing defeat of the Kings army.

11th "Charles, defeated at every point, finally fled towards Scotland, and threw himself upon the protection of the Scotch Army 1646. The Scotch, January 1647 sold him to the Parliament for 400,000 pounds, which they claimed as arrears from England."

12th "A period of strife between the Parliament in which Presbyterians predominated, and the army in which the independents had the control ensued. The independents who were rebellious, finally triumphed, and succeeded in getting Charles condemned; and January 30th 1649 he was beheaded."

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